

THE EPWORTH LEAGUE.

Its Place in Methodism.

REV. J. B. ROBINSON, D. D., PP. D.

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THE EPWORTH LEAGUE.

ITS PLACE IN METHODISM.

A Manual.

BY

John
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WITH AN INTRODUCTION

By REV. M. D. CARREL,

Sup't Epworth League Department, Western Methodist Book Concern.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE Epworth League is a child of Providence. That is to say, it is one of those providential movements which have characterized the history of the Christian Church, and are nowhere more apparent than in the rise and progress of Methodism. One of our bishops has well said that the 15th of May, 1889, with the results of its Cleveland Conference, will stand in Methodist history beside that Christmas-day of 1784, on which the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized. The Church was ripe for the Epworth League. Methodist conditions demanded it. And when the fullness of time had come, quietly, and withal so suddenly as to be a surprise and wonder to most, it took its place in our Methodist household.

To be sure, the Epworth League is one phase of a Church-wide movement of momentous significance, looking toward the organization and more thorough enlistment of young Christians in Christ's work. It can not be said that the idea had its birth with the Epworth League; nor, strictly speaking, with any

other modern young people's society. The idea of organizing and training the young is as old as the Church itself. But, studied as a phase of the modern movement, the Epworth League must have the credit of pioneering the way in a direction which we predict other branches of the movement will take ultimately. It organizes and works within strictly denominational lines. The value of its work is not yet appreciated by the Church at large, but it certainly will be by and by. It can not be that this great movement, with its vast possibilities, will result in nothing better than one great, unwieldy, undenominational, and therefore indefinable and irresponsible, organization. For the best results—for any permanent results of value—such a movement must concentrate its energies, project its enthusiasm and power, along lines of denominational effort and method. Where are the flourishing undenominational missions, or religious enterprises of any kind? And who, to-morrow, will care for those which, under the fostering of the “denominations,” scatter their benedictions in all lands, except young Methodists and Presbyterians and Baptists are taught to love and cherish their own? Methodists think there are elements of peril in unduly loosening the

bonds of denominational loyalty. And so, although for the time they are compelled to go alone, they chose a conservative middle path. They believe in and intend to cultivate the broadest charity consistent with loyalty to their own mission. But while they "*live to love every Church which exalts Christ*," they "LIVE TO MAKE THEIR OWN CHURCH A POWER IN THE WORLD." They believe that their sons and daughters will accomplish most for Christianity's common cause as they are taught to build most carefully and wisely upon their own heritage of responsibility.

But so believing, we must build carefully, wisely. Our plans must be the pattern shown us in the Mount. To know the providential design of this organization, and then how best to apply its energies to Christ's work, is a great problem. We are all eager for anything which can throw light upon that problem. I think this little volume—as nearly, perhaps, as any volume, little or big, can—gives us the key to its solution. For, after all, when a few foundation principles have been laid down, it remains for each pastor, with the help of his consecrated young people, to find the practical solution. Conditions differ so widely that, as to details, one set of plans will not do for all.

This little "manual" aims to show us these foundation principles. It points out the design of the League, and tells us how it fits into the economy of the Church. To read it, is to have a broader conception of the possibilities of this marvelous movement, and a clearer conception of its relation to every part of the Church's organism. We predict for it a wide Epworth reading. Its instruction will guide to better methods. Its exalted ideal of young Christian character, involving an all-mastering love for Christ and loyalty to his Church, will inspire young hearts with loftiest purpose, and so help into realms of power this latest child of Methodism—"THE EPWORTH LEAGUE."

MORTON D. CARREL.

CINCINNATI, OHIO, August 7, 1890.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
Introduction,	3
Historical Introduction,	9
I. The League an Aid to the Pastor,	11
II. The League an Auxiliary to the Church,	18
III. The League an Educator,	26
IV. The League an Indoctrinator,	31
V. The League a School of Christ,	38
VI. The League an Inspiration,	46
VII. The League a Promoter of Industry,	54
VIII. The League a Companionship,	60
IX. The League a Brotherhood,	71
X. The League a Promoter of Unity,	78
XI. The League an Entertainment,	84
XII. The League a Guide,	91
XIII. The League a Memento Eternal,	99
XIV. The League the Light Brigade of the Church Militant,	104
XV. The League the Supply of Certain Unpro- vided Wants,	109
XVI. Conclusion,	113
Appendix,	117



HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

THE name *Epworth* is memorable in the history of Methodism. Samuel Wesley, a rector in the Church of England, father of John and Charles Wesley, in 1693 published a poetical "Life of Christ." He dedicated it to Queen Anne, who, in return, conferred on him the pastorate of the church and living at Epworth, Lincoln County, England. Here were born to Samuel and Susanna Wesley, among other children, John and Charles. In honor of these distinguished founders of Methodism the *Epworth League* has been named.

The Sabbath-school, common to several Churches, was the first general organization in the Church for the religious instruction of youth. Of late it has appeared that a youths' society, involving work, was demanded by the greater evangelizing activities of our time. In response to this de-

mand there grew up spontaneously, in the Methodist Episcopal Church, several societies—some local, some general. But the young people, as well as the fathers, saw that unity was vital. Hence, at a meeting of delegates from these several societies, held at Cleveland, Ohio, May 14 and 15, 1889, amid remarkable Christian harmony and unanimity, it was resolved to form one society for the entire Church, combining the excellencies of all. The new society is called the Epworth League. In the following Manual are named some of the principal features of the plans and work of the League.

CHAPTER I.

THE LEAGUE AN AID TO THE PASTOR.

WHAT is the relation of the League to the preacher? It is his efficient and practical helper. The pastor is held directly responsible for all religious services connected with his charge. All plans must be in harmony with his plans. While his chief work is to save souls, yet this indirectly involves a variety of duties from those almost purely secular up to the most spiritual possible to man. He must not only build churches and raise benevolences, but on the highest mountain of responsibility he must point the dying to the Lamb of God.

The pastor's duties are so multiplied, both as defined in the Discipline and spontaneously springing out of his profession, that he could clearly increase his usefulness if some division of labor could array as his aids other helpers and all helpers.

Wisely and opportunely the League comes to the pastor's aid. He has scarcely a burden that the League can not lighten. Each of its six departments assumes directly some part of the pastor's cares and burdens. He is put in control of a trusty company of fellow-workers, greatly increasing his power for usefulness.

The League helps the pastor to systematize his work, and put in action his co-workers under his personal supervision. There is a remarkable similarity between the League's schedule of department duties defined in Leaflet No. 2* and pastoral duties as defined in the Discipline. While the official work of the pastor is technically his own, yet it may be amazingly eased and advanced by these young colleagues. Does the pastor need an immediate substitute to care for a religious interest, he has but to summon Department I. Does he wish to push evangelism into the by-ways, then Department II is his ever-ready auxiliary. Would he augment usefulness by libraries,

* See Appendix I.

lyceums, and lectures, Department III is his cheerful co-worker. Does he desire a well-trained committee to execute his plans in any field, he is at once supplied by calling upon the proper department of the League. The League does not baptize, but it leads to the pastor's hands many a subject for baptism. It does not administer the Lord's Supper, but it keeps nourishing scores of struggling souls, so that they are faithful candidates at the Lord's Supper. The pastor of to-day is to be a living, moving *multum in parvo*, and the League becomes to him hands and feet, eyes and ears.

The League prepares the way for the pastor. This is markedly true with outsiders and seekers. The League can often reach them easier and sooner than the pastor. A marvelous revolution is enlarging the numbers of those who are God's best co-workers. In Judaism the priest was left almost alone with things pertaining to the sanctuary. But, in our day, pastor and people, young and old—and especially the young—aim to be active

workers in the whitening harvest. Public opinion demands it. Instead of the exclusive priest, the rank and file of the Church militant is found eager for the work of soul-saving. This has vastly multiplied efficient spiritual helpers.

Another secret of the ages has come into the light in our day, viz.: Christian enjoyment and growth are in exact proportion to personal Christian work. Hitherto the Lord has had too many silent partners—if, indeed, a silent partner of the Lord is not a myth. Now there is a grand advance all along the line. What Judaism prepared for was realized after John the Baptist, under Christ; and what nineteen Christian centuries have been preparing for is now bursting into a realization. "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." The League is the glorious device for pouring holy oil upon all, and consecrating the ransomed millions to minister in his name to the unsaved. When the League becomes such a training-school of the minor prophets that it will resolve all into

prophets, then every pastor will be wanted as a lieutenant-general of this army of prophets. In that day the army of the Lord will be invincible.

It was long ago discovered in political economy that the detailed minutiae of processes required vastly more time and labor than the few well-defined and systematized leading processes. An ingenious Frenchman, who was intrusted by the Government with a wilderness of statistics to develop, engaged two or three expert mathematicians at high salary to unravel the more complex general problems; for the further elimination of these problems to simple formulas he employed a much larger number of less skillful and less expensive accountants; and, finally, a much larger number of men versed in the simple processes of addition and multiplication, reduced these formulas to figures. This device of the Frenchman is commended as a master achievement. The Epworth League is precisely such an array of workers of varied talent and taste. First, the pastor is

intrusted with the entire problem of saving souls; then come Leagues, departments, sub-departments, members. It is of the first importance that people in this world find a congenial realm for the employment of their talents. It is as important that the fifty or one hundred League workers find that field which will bear most fruit for each, and yield most individual growth, as it is that the pastor be stationed in his proper field.

Christ formed the first Epworth League when he found men standing idle in the market-places, and said: "Go ye also into the vineyard." In that group were future pastors, and all the major and minor workmen which Christ needed. And when their field was reached, each pair of hands was doubtless directed to that rank of the harvesters where he could best achieve. I imagine some must entwine the tendrils, some must lift the trailing vines to the strong supports, some must prune the useless abundance, some must carry home the red-ripe grape to the wine-press of God. But beyond these

fields of our earthly Leagues and labors all the rewards of immortality allure. Pastor and people will receive their daily wages for faithfulness below. Not the least to the faithful worker will be the witnesses who will say: "I was hungry, and ye gave me meat."

CHAPTER II.

THE LEAGUE AN AUXILIARY TO THE CHURCH.

HOW does the League help the Church? A large proportion of public sermons is, by necessity, directed to obdurate hearts of unbelief. People grow up without religious decision because somebody thought them not old enough yet to become Christians. There is a sort of mistaken opinion that Satan ought to have as fair play with young souls as the Lord. There is also a prevalent opinion that little children should not hasten into a religious life, an opinion of which Satan is, no doubt, the author. It is certainly true that Christ has a right to this world—to all human thought and worship from the cradle to the grave. It is also true that Satan should be granted no interval during youth in which he may sow corruption. While infants are all born in sin because of Adam's lineage, yet in Christ the Adamic corruption is all washed

away. Then, in children up to the point of accountability, no repentance is essential. Precisely at this point the little child heart should be so kept full of love, faith, song, religious instructions, and so surrounded, that it will never sin, and never grow hard, and never need to bitterly repent. This is the theory on which Christ would form his Church. "Suffer little children to come unto me." Thus little Samuel, son of Elkanah, was kept sinless; and he heard at the first consciousness the first call, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." True, his environments were unusual, in the temple, where only sacrifice and worship met the eye and the heart. True, most children are more exposed to temptation and evil example than Samuel was. Yet is not a Christian home expected to be a holy of holies? Is not mother the most sacred priestess of them all? Is not the Sabbath-school a place of purity exclusively? Is not the Church to be a Zion as clean as the temple? Yes. Then here is, additionally, the Epworth League, in which

is the "milk of the Word for babes." Exactly upon this plan, which is the Lord's plan, the League endeavors to find and organize children and youth, in order to bridge this fearful chasm. To run the gauntlet of Satanic influence from the age of moral responsibility to the age of maturity, in order to gratify a mistaken public opinion, is, alas! the children's valley and shadow of death. And many a little moral carcass strews the way. Who, then, can deny this Church auxiliary, the League, where the valley will be filled with helping angels, and where the shadows will be chased away?

It is a sad fact that the Church-rolls of all denominations contain many nominal, useless, inconsistent members, who are a burden of discount. Why? In most part, because neglected youth has given them a defective character, which clings to them through life. People are so susceptible to infirmity! Yet such is the inexorable law of habit, that added infirmities assume form in the void of early life,

when they ought to have been bent by Epworth Leagues and Sabbath-schools into clean, strong Christian manhood, without infirmity. Thus apparent infirmity is often only the later harvest of sin. It is a most stubborn fact that when the church-bells ring out for the evening of regular prayer, that Protestant Angelus to Christ himself, but one in four or one in ten comes to the place of prayer. "Where are the nine?" They are victims to the sins and habits that came in tender age, when they were waiting without the temple, among the unsaved, until public opinion accorded them sufficient age to be Church members.

When the place of prayer and class is reached, there is another class of worshipers who are strangely dumb before the Lord. Here they are as silent as death, although elsewhere they can explain most eloquently, with loosened tongue, why they can not speak or pray in church. O consistency! Half the eloquence of their apologies poured out at the prayer-meeting, in

devotion before God, would secure them the reputation of Apollos, while their religious enjoyment, spiritual power, and growth in grace would make them modern Daniels. But what is their disease? Moral paralysis of the heart, superinduced by moral inaction in youth.

Our prescription for them shall be radical. We must not tamper with the vital functions of soul. Let the full sunlight of grace directly into the infant heart, keep it shining later in the child heart, let its zenith beams point shadowless into the youth heart, and all the way the product will be a ripe Christian. He will have a loose tongue at the hour of prayer, and a hundred-fold of power to work and win souls. A dumb, stay-at-home Christian is a monstrosity, and a formalist in heaven is a myth.

While Christ uttered a clearly-tested adage, "He that is not with me is against me," it would appear that nominal Christians are on a strike to compel Christ to recognize a third or intermediate class on

the moral fence, yet sitting with their faces Zionward.

What shall be done? Bring on the Church's opportune auxiliary, the League. Let the junior League emarginate with home and mother. Diffuse truth through the kindergarten age in pictures and simple, easy, attractive lessons. Bring alongside the choice associations of pure hearts. Sweeten the service with innocent amusements and picnics. Beguile the tedium with enchanting music. Fill the mental void with declamations and readings and pure literature. The League is like a feast with six courses, where no taste is unprovided for in the upbuilding of vigorous character.

O, if this plan, as the Church's auxiliary, could embrace all the dear children, and the League could have its perfect work, there would be a moral revolution in the manner of receiving Church members! There would be less of that long agony of repentance for hardened sinners, and more of that easy transfer from the innocent

ranks of those who have known the Lord from childhood. There would be fewer assuming those burdens of dumb sheep who, in comparative weakness and worthlessness, go mourning uselessly all their days, and there would be more of the vigorous Church workers, real soldiers, positive loosened tongues never palsied by forced or voluntary silence. Bring the auxiliaries to the front.

It is manifest that the value of a new Church member will largely depend upon the character of his previous training. That is, a League-trained member is likely to be more skilled and useful than one from Christless antecedents. There is a mock heroism which almost glories in a previous life of shame, and courts that notoriety which its exhibition procures. But, after all, the Church loves to trust and honor a well-rounded Christian who has walked with God all his days.

Thus the Epworth League is making "his paths straight" for the young pilgrim. There need be no long, dark paths of sin;

no wide, fateful deserts of moral dearth; no dangerous, hair-breadth escapes from yawning chasms; but simply one straight path, delightful to child and man, up to the very gates of immortality.

CHAPTER III.

THE LEAGUE AN EDUCATOR.

INFANT minds are hopeful blanks. As the artist spreads his plates with tender chemicals, sensitive to the sunlight, so the Maker of childhood has endowed child natures with delicate susceptibilities.

Childhood needs to be set rejoicing in pure social sunlight. It requires to be delivered from trashy and evil literature, as it is saved from the packages marked "arsenic" on the high shelf. The proper device for three-fourths of the books of our day would be a skull and cross-bones, with a coffin in the background. The Church, which has proven its efficiency by passing up to the Church triumphant, for one hundred and twenty-five years, a daily average of seventy souls, is by these fruits divinely acknowledged to be fitted for the guidance of its children to Christian maturity, to usefulness, and to the same Church tri-

umphant. We may safely trust God and his agency of the wise and holy leaders whom he has called to direct the affairs of the League. These leaders have deliberated, prayed, toiled, and finally systematized the excellent plans of the Epworth League. And we now speak of it as an educator.

Head and heart are inseparable. A division between them would create two monstrosities. Valuable as is the common-school system, yet it tends to separate head and heart. No wonder these little monstrosities of the land multiply into heartless skeptics, atheists, law-breakers, misanthropes. The common ground of citizenship, as claimed by the worst element and accepted by State courts, is acceptable to heathen, pagan, Mohammedan, Jew, barbarian, or Mormon, because all are citizens and all tax-payers. Hence the moral teaching of the common schools is a compromise on a very low plane with all these. The Bible, though the greatest light, is as much rejected from our common schools as it

was from the French nation in its bloody revolution. Just here the Church has rushed to the rescue, ever jealous of its Bible. Among its many plans for fortifying the breach, it has devised the curriculum of the Epworth League.* It has sweetened mental culture with Bible truth and grace. It has furnished the entire, threefold being with a healthful and satisfying portion. Devotion is inclined upward by the provision for prayer and Christian song. Books reflecting Bible truth, whose contents are pure and sanctified, are made attractive to the young. *The Epworth Herald*, a clean, neat periodical, is the organ of the League. With these provisions for mental development, the young are fed on a safe and delightful portion. The League recognizes and provides for the entire complex being. Those qualities in youth which are devout, looking Godward; those which are reverential to parent and to age; those which are reflective and logical, holding in circumspection universal nature; those which are

* See Appendix II.

social, craving the voice and sympathy of humanity; and those which are economic, making reasonable response to the queries, "What ye shall eat, what ye shall drink, and wherewithal ye shall be clothed,"—are all harmoniously blended in the studies and readings of the League. Young people are more intolerant of inaction than are those of riper years. In fact, in the young is a living impetuosity that demands action, while the excess of wear in age craves passiveness. Hence the important problem is to wisely direct and supervise the action. Young life hungers and thirsts for truth, for facts, for the strange things in the realm of the unknown. Wisely the fathers of the Church have appointed the League, and set it in motion to teach every child and feast it to satisfaction amid the miracles of revealed truth, from the hands of Jesus, who blesses and breaks the feast. Ever since there was an Epworth home of the Wesleys, there has been the consecration of books and songs, and types and papers, and printing-presses and schools.

One of the important cautions to the inexperience of childhood is, to be guarded against the secret poison lurking in much that is printed, and made enticing with pictures and morocco binding. The very salutary selection of books which the League presents for educating the young is not only an antidote to these lurking poisons, but a moral tonic to make life and growth.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LEAGUE AN INDOCTRINATOR.

“**A**N enemy hath sown tares;” and the beautiful harvest-field is corrupted. How did it happen? Somebody is to blame. While the husbandmen slept, it was perpetrated. “Ye are the husbandmen.” The Church assumes the responsibility of strict watching. The Church is responsible for the inculcation of right doctrine among the young. There are many, many young lives poisoned by false doctrine, and they become moral wrecks. Off the track; on the down-grade; a collision; a crash; a carnage; a conflagration; funerals; finis. This is a short tragedy of seven chapters and a sequel—eternal death.

Why should the child of many prayers become an infidel, and start a race of infidels? Unfaithfulness in the watchmen admitted the wary enemy; and behold, tares! Lincoln’s precious life might have

been preserved but for the carelessness of his body-guard, who was fascinated with the play, and strayed away from his post, while the desperado crept in and murdered the President. Why do so many young men stray off among rationalists, freethinkers, and the irreligious? Why so many crush parental hearts and hopes by wandering into bald heterodoxy, so that once hopeful lives become sheer blanks forever? But what can you expect from gardens of tender tropical flowers and precious fields of golden wheat and corn, if the fences are all torn down, while swine and cattle are freely admitted? Is it not equally reasonable to suppose that precious young souls, unguarded by any restraints, will fall a prey to every spiritual foe; that hungry, longing souls, unprovided with toothsome, wholesome doctrine, will feed upon husks, or even that which may be sweetened poison?

The fruits of the field, the flowers of the garden, and the cattle of the stall are more faithfully dealt with. Men swarm to

agricultural fairs, read agricultural journals, and apply agricultural chemistry, in order to insure beneficent results. Shall the drawing-room be wholly transformed into a ball-room? Shall cards and wine freely tempt with their allurements? Shall the bar-room, the store-box, and the street-corners bid in competition for the evening hours of our sons? No. Too much of inestimable value is at stake.

There is an age between parental control and the later influence of wife or husband, that is flippantly denominated the "wild-oats" period. It is a most dangerous age. It is an interregnum of social anarchy. To bridge this age-chasm safely is a most sacred obligation upon the fathers, to the end that the children may walk it in safety. To clothe truth with charms, to environ purity with sweet restraints, to enrapture youthful taste with wholesome feast, to fix the admiration of young lives upon the ideal pictures and models of perfect manhood and womanhood, is the important indoctrinating function of the League. It

presents plans of counteraction against fashionable temptations; it proposes to pre-occupy body, mind, and spirit with holy duty and healthful exercise; it endeavors to establish the faith upon the Word, and to transplant doctrines from the nurseries of inspiration, as written by the Spirit to concrete, living souls, until these doctrines become a part of the being.

While the League's plans and provisions for this indoctrination are wise and ample, their execution, like the saying plans of the Church itself, are intrusted to human instrumentalities.

It is valuable to a youth to spend his activities and faith in the channels where the habits are to be formed, and the pure life is to be most useful and safe. "Who-soever shall do my will, shall know of the doctrine." Doing and knowing are to each other as cause and effect. I know of some excellent building-stone which must be guarded from freezing when first quarried; but after drying, it becomes solid and invulnerable to frost. I know also of tender

young souls which must not be exposed to temptation until established. Their endurance is quite limited at first; but later, being inured, their resistance of evil is confirmed. I know a League of thirty members. Some are weak, none are strong. They provoke each other to good works. Six committees report weekly progress. Some victories are achieved, some trophies gained. The triumph of each is the rejoicing of all. Coronation is sung in unison. Thirty lives rise higher, and are quickened in a moral advance. This process is repeated fifty-two weeks in a year. Truth and beauty are becoming fruitful old trees in the moral garden. It is an astonishment how abnormal and contracted is a depraved heart. It is amazing how sin abounding absorbs every mental and moral substance within; so much so, that no pure, noble impulse can spring up. The law of habit has been reversed, and evil asserts itself and extends its sway from center to circumference.

The law of increase in inner faculties is

a good law, *per se*; but it must work in accord with the constitution of our moral being. Analogically, botany illustrates our point. The wild rose has only five feeble petals in its corolla; but yonder magnificent multiform rose of our garden-wall is the product of the wild rose, amplified by cultivation. Divergency, and consequent enlargement, is the law of growth; but to render the enlargement in youthful lives perpetual is the victory of indoctrination. Advance to-day, and fortify before night-fall. Repeat the same process each day, and you not only execute a brave march, but you also train veterans. This is the indoctrination of the Church militant. Our League is not a corps of observation, but an army of occupation.

The League promotes stability of character. The "line-upon-line" process of old Israel is the sole method of rendering morals invincible. While patents float short methods to all the technics of manual activity, the technic of spiritual expansion and settlement uses only the old patent of Moses

and the prophets as unrivaled—"line upon line." If the League deviated from the Bible in this regard, the League would merit repudiation. For the Bible and the Church being of divine origin, and therefore complete, would suffer no new doctrine to supersede what God has provided. Modern patents on religion are inventions of the Evil One. But the League will continue to indoctrinate in the old ways and the old truths.

CHAPTER V.

THE LEAGUE A SCHOOL OF CHRIST.

THE range of human possibilities is so wide as to be fearfully dangerous. It sweeps all the way from an angel to a devil. It is easy to be a devil, for the inside heart will second the call of the outside tempter; but to become an angel, the inner life resists the outer. Sleep and unconcern will produce an incarnate demon. In a word, absolute inaction and indifference will grow rank demons; but it requires eternal vigilance, faith, and prayer to expel the evil spirits and substitute virtue, until the life is like that of the beautiful Christ. From small to great is both proof and direction of growth; but from great to small is the destiny of decay and degeneracy. Shrinkage is the law of devils; expansion presages life and growth.

Which road shall be pointed out to our children? Shall the prophets have a suc-

cession among us? Shall the Church of to-morrow have its ranks recruited, which are depleted by the translations of to-day? Shall the infants that brought so much joy and love during their innocence and helplessness, be now turned adrift, under the guidance of heartless enemies, into the haunts of vice and temptation? The Church and the parent, in part, intrust the problem to the League. Here are the young, helpless germs most precious, the hope of the Church and the world, the candidates for mansions, and the nuclei for giants and heroes of moral power and grandeur. These souls must be trained; for they are the purchased lambs of Christ. This is the sublimest work ever committed to another. Yonder hundred acres of blank fallow of pulverized soil, it is true, has been sowed with wheat; but the eye can see in it no future except barren soil continued. Faith, however, has heard of the sown seed; and faith beholds a yellow harvest, and faith's vision also discovers full granaries and luscious loaves. So the fathers and mothers

look to the field of childhood and youth; and while their prayers and faith are zealously alive, they bestow a most sacred trust upon the League as guardians of the coming harvest of souls and the coming eternity of joy. This is Christ's school. Now, ye teachers, use supernal wisdom. There is a first desire—it is an inquiry for truth. The entire swarm of young minds is on the alert. The spirit of inquiry is awakened. Be steady, for the moment is critical. Now paint virtue with irresistible charms; show the hideousness of vice. Steady: your impressions have gone home. There is an easy highway into every heart. Now introduce Christ within. A moral revolution is on. Hasten each young hand and heart to “crown him Lord of all.” There he is, enthroned within. How beautiful! how heavenly! Now build up the environments. Make them so high that demons can never overleap them. Now create the life-giving vitality, or rather promote the conditions that will enable Christ, the blessed Creator, to breathe forever fresh vitality. There!

that is a success. Now your growing immortals must be fed and feasted. Bring on the dishes. Let every course be daintily sweetened with the health of grace. Remember, there must be no lurking germ of disease introduced by the feast. There! that meal is most wholesome for upbuilding moral giants. It is to be repeated until the first old corn can be had in the Canaan of our immortality. But did you create at the feast the spirit and habit of thanksgiving?

Children and youth are eminently teachable. If they be thus safely leagued with Jesus and taught at his feet, now as a foundation of faith, the superstructure that will rise will be gloriously towering. How well the Epworth League's six departments correspond with Peter's eight degrees of Christian growth—faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly-kindness, charity! The former is a fair duplicate of the latter. By the time the Junior League is prefixed for the children, the sameness is striking. Mind you, growth in

this school does not imply passiveness—like a motionless tree—but impulsive desire and longing effort, and gradual, permanent enlargement of soul and mind. Mustard-seed faith is to become, by enlargement, a mountain-mover. That virtue, at first microscopic, is to become the bones of a spiritual constitution. The minimum of initial knowledge is to expand into the devout sage. Growing temperance must become able to reject all the harmful and moderate all the healthful. Patience must go on unto perfection, until it gladly suffers for Christ's sake. Godliness, shadowy at first, is more and more a clear, Christ-like reflection. Brotherly-kindness begins to stretch itself away out of self, until it encompasses friends and foes. Charity polishes away at the cap-stone of the superstructure, until hand and heart would reach out, like Jesus, to the salvation of the world. This is moral upbuilding in Christ's school.

Every provision of the Epworth League conforms to and aids this law of progression. The expanding of a young soul is

not by external accretion, but by internal growth. A good school-master does not cram, but just puts the subject into favorable conditions, and growth has a sort of spontaneity. Any growth is a miracle. It is all superhuman. It is more—a new creation in man's utter helplessness and God's absolute authority.

One of the objects of any school is discipline. To fashion into true models of habit, to establish in virtue, to develop an actor always ready for the coming arena—in a word, to secure perfect, commanding, symmetrical manhood and womanhood—is the true object of any school. But a school of Christ has only one object; namely, to fashion Christ-like disciples. It is to unfold Christian virtues, like fragrant and beautiful flowers, and turn out steady master-workers in Christ's vineyard.

"Self-made" men are absurd apparitions. Even the fabled phoenix has ashes for a parentage. Yet the League, which can not create, so wisely fashions its plans that the members are co-workers with the Christ

who does create. They stand obedient to the law of creation, where divine power can transform them into wider being. They can not help but grow, for they walk and act in obedience to the law of vitalization. Enrolled in this school, "Paul may plant, Apollos water, but God giveth the increase." Self-made angels, self-made saints, and self-made Christians would be as novel a ghostly menagerie as would be the materialization of mythical gorgons, nymphs, elves, and mermaids. Every real Christian is a pupil in the school of Christ, and every saint in glory is a graduate of the same. The Church is a school of Christ, of which this world is an enchanting campus. The League is a primary department, and each one is honorably promoted who is worthy to take the vows of a faithful Church member. Let the Head-master issue the certificates in his own name!

It is a true axiom that we study best what we love to study. We also study most devoutly under a master whom we love. The perfection of this school of

Christ is best secured by getting the pupils in love with Christ. The League aims to do this. When the Christ-nature is painted so beautifully and presented so charmingly that one loves to hear Christ's words, in order to be with him—or, conversely, loves to be with him, in order to hear his words—that eagerness is the perfection of a scholar. To make such scholars is the aim of the League.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LEAGUE AN INSPIRATION.

I SEE the waters go to rest, folded upon their own great bosom, and they breathlessly rest until putrefaction covers them. And their green scum becomes their shroud of deathly stillness. But I hear the rumblings of an inspiration. The freighted wind is coming on with breathing power. The waters are winnowed into waves. Now they break upon the shore in white-caps. Now billows chase billows across the deep undulations. The waters live in ponderous force, and in their new resurrection they have cast their green shroud upon the shore.

I behold a dead calm in the forest. Every leaf seems laboredly gasping its stomata in the wilting crisp of dry, lifeless dissolution. Will it ever revive? Behold, a moist-laden breeze, the forerunner of a storm of reviving carbon, ammonia, and

rain! Each limb bows in thanks. Each tree takes heart. Each twig shoots a jubilation. The forest is alive with hallelujahs!

Shall our boys and girls do less than the waters and the trees? Nature permits a fatal lullaby for our indolence and a passive quietus for our inertness. Vice has its inspiration—shall not virtue be felt? Each child-nature is replete with the positives of evil to set soul and body in a whirl of activity. But pure virtue is negated by passiveness and deadness. What breath of life and power shall breathe an inspiration upon our sons and daughters, that they spring into the love of a moral activity? Who can beautify the graces of righteousness, that children may long for them as charming gems? Who can bend young souls to goodness with a magnetic enthusiasm? Who can bugle them away from the charms of vice? O, for an inspiration! The kingdom, power, and glory are of the Lord; but he works most marvelously through human instrumentalities. Two problems must be solved in unison: 1. Young

hands and hearts must be animated into positive action ; 2. They must be moved into virtuous action.

First, let the social longing be gratified by clean, harmonious fellowship with the pure and good ; for youth thrives on sociability. This is the first step of the League ; namely, a society. Secondly, let the voice of song, prayer, and Scripture be introduced, to expel the spiritual foe. Let it be done with such pleasing charm that the exertion shall articulate delightful jubilee for social and moral breezes and surroundings. This is the second step of the League. Thirdly, young constitutions love to be physically fed, and to luxuriate in banquets of mind where the voices and works of nature may be sympathetic and helpful. There are certain eras and visions of childhood which no lapse of age can eradicate. Our little lives have stood on some mount of vision or of transfiguration just as truly as James, Peter, and John stood on Hermon ; and we have all been transfixed with rapture, until we have exclaimed : " Let us

make here three tabernacles—one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.” And these mountain superstructures of the soul’s vivid architecture have ever staid in present vision, defiant of years and decay.

The League seizes upon these halcyon laws, and provides festival and picnic to enchant childhood in holy fascination, until the Epworth love will clamor in delight: “Let us make here three tabernacles.” The law of temperate eating and drinking remained pure after the Fall, to minister health and pleasure; and that law was holy, just, and good. The picnic law survives the first sin. Eden itself was a picnic ground. Enoch held picnic with God. Christ met in picnic with the multitudes about the Sea of Galilee, and gained their hearts by feeding them in miracles. If there be any one inspiration that can set the intellections, the affections, and the volitions all aglow, so as to

“Live through all life,
Extend through all extent,”

it is the picnic and the stroll and the social cup of bliss in the woody green by the purling brook.

"He went upon the strength of that meal forty days to Horeb, the mount of God." And, likewise, the Epworth League provides a table, from which ardent worshipers rise up to go to Zion, the mountain of God.

That other problem which the equation of young hands involves, is work—work sanctified—relishing, gladsome work. It must be sweetened into a utility and delight whose result is inspiring and satisfying. Boys will take a thousand steps hunting, fishing, flying a kite, or chasing a butterfly, and would enjoy a thousand more, when ten steps of stale toil would weary. Here is just where any society may profitably expand into a committee of the whole to sweeten labor by mingling recreation. On this principle the League is a *bona fide* hive of workers. No drones need apply. With young hearts coming, freshly bathed in visions of glory and fountains of purity,

the inspired lips respond: "Here am I, Lord; send me."

I see the League everywhere, transformed into a host, carrying evangels. Like the seventy, they go to the field of sowing and harvest. Other precious young life is perishing all around. Every funeral pile of the spiritually dead becomes a pulpit for scattering these evangels. Every erring, dying soul is a congregation. Every Bible-call, or promise, or hope, is a theme of salvation. Nobly they "persuade men;" and the rich bounty of the harvest to be, who can estimate? The figures are forwarded to the recording angel.

In the spring, when the sun genially shines, the workers all fly away from the bee-hive among the flowers for pollen and honey, until only the queen and the drones remain. So, when the "Sun of Righteousness" genially shines in life's spring-time, the King of kings sends forth the League-workers to gather in immortal souls, redolent with new-found grace and salvation. Their Christian presence is sweeter than

honey to enrich the hive. O, what glorious pollen-dust is this! Surely, if an angel be inspired with the gardens of Hesperus, a true Leaguer must be inspired with fields of Christian work like this.

But the "greatest of these is charity." When a human being can leave his own sorrows in Gethsemane, and in sweet sympathy go forth to lift the fallen, bind up the bruised and broken, feed the hungry, breathe hope into the despairing, it is that supernal mystery into which "angels desire to look." When grace can transform our own poor lives into ministering spirits, we are nearest angels and nearest Christ. That capital mainspring of joy is reached when the life is gladly spent in works of charity. Such a life is a superior climax of earthly felicity. Hence, the fathers, who provided for the workings of the League, well devised when they included works of charity among the exercises. It is the true inspiration of Paul, which is to broaden sanctified energies beyond self and home, seas and mountains; beyond the seen and tangible; beyond

walls and bounds—to the ends of the earth—for helping the family of man.

Life must be inspired, and the breath that heaven offers is the true inspiration. But the skill in reaching all workers to insure the highest results depends much upon the skill of the leaders, the division of labor, mutual confidence, and other questions. Hence the League arrays its forces under the skillful *régime* of prayer and faith. It most lovingly brings its influences to bear upon the unsaved. There is no salary to the workers save the hundred-fold of God, the clear conscience, and the growth in grace which attends obligations discharged.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LEAGUE A PROMOTER OF INDUSTRY.

HOW far indolence became an outcrop of Eden lost, we can not aver. How much a conflict with the law of gravitation mingles honest weariness with native indolence, we dare not safely estimate. Whether pure spirit can be accused of laziness, we venture not to affirm. But we may safely say, that after the fall, with body and spirit in partnership, and with inclinations to evil rather than to good, humanity must be helped in order to reach a goal of pure good. Proneness and laziness hang heavily on any effort of progress, and moral gravity is against man.

Philosophers, moralists, and sages have gone in search for incitements to industry, and they have been poorly rewarded. But in the religious universe is the discovery of a higher law. Gravitation of matter, bent of mind, sovereignty of will,

all yield to the higher law. "I delight to do thy will, O God." This delight was more than an experiment of David. It was his experience. It was the sample for the Christian during the ages. It was the normal operation of the higher law.

How shall a delight to do God's will become the higher law to this world? The Epworth League rises to propose its plan. It engages to substitute industry in righteous enterprises for the laziness which sin impresses. It aims to set the muscles in an agreeable motion of duty. It is to make duty so pleasant as to eliminate burdens from our tasks. It intends to beguile the powers of being into a right activity until the habit is formed. It puts the association of duty in so charming a light that its members delight in duty. The activity that is begotten in the performance of pleasant duty only needs to have its momentum transferred to all the duties of our lives. Thus industry is rendered into a permanent habit. The League has set the hand in motion, and the League has dis-

covered and applied the exhortation of Solomon: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." This is the consummation of the habit formed in youth, the right culture of powers within. It is the secret of the League to awaken industry.

But division of labor is the cardinal principle recognized by political economists in the world's marts of industry. This perfects each one in some branch of complex employments; this perfects the products, and this vastly facilitates final results. The League, true to political economy, divides its workers into six committees, and then subdivides each committee further, to reach the minutiae and produce perfect work. That God who appointed some evangelists and some teachers and some apostles, has created aptitudes, with likes and dislikes, among young people. In the enrollment of a League, diversity of talent is found for the amplest division into pleasant labor. Hearts are set throbbing and hands moving where preferred choice will

accelerate activity. The Church's coming evangelist, being divinely appointed, is starting in his favorite field in the League's "systematic visitation;" the future teacher is here adjusted to the "Department of Literary Work;" if there be a coming apostle, his missionary spirit may kindle in the "Department of Christian Work;" a pastor in embryo will emerge from his chrysalis to his public estate in the League's "Bible study;" if there be an intended prophet, let him be made president of the League where his early divinations can assume form. Thus the League is a miniature Zion, with its labors and triumphs, its defeats and its heavenly helps.

It would be a sad picture to witness this vast aggregate of talent in a million of young Methodists running to waste. That very conservative compromise which admits young life to be debatable ground, and bargains with Satan on a policy of neutrality in regard to the young, is, in fact, a complete surrender to the enemy.

Unless the Epworth League and the

Sabbath-school foster the young in goodness, Satan will rear them in iniquity. Who shall be the guiding power of this million—Jesus, or Apollyon?

When we speak of the League as the promoter of industry, we recognize the law of increase in the ongoing enlargement of that industry. Statisticians of our country estimate the population of the Republic a century hence at one thousand millions. The increased power of each one, through the increase of knowledge, machinery, and inventions, will be incalculable. The Epworth League of to-day may be regarded as only the root of a geometrical progression of unknown but vastly great exponent. The industry of to-day will produce multiplied results to-morrow. As Moses and Paul set in action forces to bless the many millions of followers of Jesus in the Christian lands of this age, so we in turn labor for the miracle of a proportionate increase in the ages yet to be. Industry is contagious to the coming generations. How important that every influence be sanctified

by such helps as the League affords to those upon the threshold! Association and proper rivalry promote industry. Chicago is Chicago because the inhabitants spur each other in enterprise. The best man in many a little village, having no rival, ceases to aspire and grow. But a city full has indefinite competition. The League is a moral corporation, in size like a city, each member moving his neighbor to higher achievements. Human models are salutary if they range in right line towards the divine model. Every true League-worker, striving to model after Christ, inspires his fellow to higher industry by himself walking in right line in the footsteps of Christ.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LEAGUE A COMPANIONSHIP.

CRUSOE, on Juan Fernandez, is a companionless estate. Crusoe is therefore an impersonation of misery. Complete solitude in our prisons constitutes the final punishment in the descending gradation. Homelessness is not so inhospitable for want of meat, bread, and shelter, as for want of society. The horse, in his palatial stable, apart from his associates, will incessantly call, and pine away. So with nearly all the animals. Companionship in human life, and especially in young life, is intensely demanded. When great thoughts of mind and great affections of soul overflow, there must be companions for a receptacle. Hermits, being misanthropes and social maniacs, seek their own asylum in the deserts and forests. That wretch possessed of devils and among the tombs, was a case of the social instincts abandoned,

and his ostracized condition was the dire result.

The native instincts of human nature are still unchanged. "It is not good for man to be alone." In a new Western territory, where men, without wife, sister, mother, or daughter, brave the vast unknown alone, there is a partial abandonment of virtue, religion, morality, and civilization. No wonder moral anarchy results. It is a fearful risk of ambition. The saloon and the den of infamy know these facts, and they embellish gilded halls in marble mansions; they make siren music, and enchant with winsome pictures; they put up in gay apparel mock companions, and paint the semblance of smiles in a painful endeavor to reproduce the masquerade of happiness; they start the skeletons of sorrow in giddy motion down to death, and call it a dance of joy; they drink the intoxicants of death, and call it the exhilarations of life. All this wickedness Satan and his clan devise and execute to deceive people, and especially young people, into the allure-

ments of a false companionship. The whole scheme is a Satanic device, seizing upon a vulnerable spot in our being—the social impulsion—by which to deliver our race to himself.

How many lonely brothers might have been detained at home and saved, had there been loving and ingenious sisterly companionship to outrival the spurious haunts of abandon! How many young men are made to see, on the outside of these haunts, a sort of attractive daub of rheumatic joy, and their actors in agony of secret pain, aping purity and delight, but enticed within, become the victims of sin and death! O for some unstained and refined association to save the young, and make them ultimately the companions of angels!

Did not the All-wise Christ foresee and prepare for these emergencies? Did he not authorize his servants, by all the solemnities of the suspended sword of warning to stand as watchmen over the people in their danger? Directly at this threshold of the young people's peril, the Church stations

the Epworth League. Its provisions anticipate danger with salutary preventives. It offers an environment of virtuous companionship made useful, holy, and agreeable. The League invites and urges each youth, from his home nursery, to the full fellowship and sympathy of the worthy. It embarks all its forces in one common endeavor for charming youth into higher and purer life. Its certificate of membership is an introduction to good society anywhere. It assures of good moral character in the marts of trade and the temples of truth. In the light of compulsion, the League makes its silken bond only a gossamer web to bind members into a life of virtue. But the friendship once begun, the bond of companionship grows stronger—strong as the love between David and Jonathan—strong as life.

Cicero says: "There is in friendship a certain common bond, as it were, which renders lives into a oneness." How beautifully this hunger of our nature, aching for companionship, is wholesomely fed by the

provisions of the League! How strong and abiding the moral constitution becomes where thus feasted! The League would bring all its members to the living fountains, to which Jesus invited the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well, saying: "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

As a place to go, a place to be, a place to form friendships, a place to grow better, a place to achieve good, the League is our most inviting social center. To find partners in a lasting companionship, it is a moral bonanza.

The Christian Intelligencer has well pictured this value of companionship in the appended story:

A SISTER'S INFLUENCE.

"If I only had a sister, Cousin Helen! But I am so lonely. You know, since mamma died, I have no one but papa and Hugh."

The speaker was a young girl only

eighteen years of age, but her earnest face was expressive of strong character.

"Why not let Hugh take a sister's place?" suggested Cousin Helen.

"How?" And Margie's eyes really sparkled.

"Talk with him about the many things, both great and small, which interest you. Brothers like to feel that their sisters can trust them. Margie," continued Cousin Helen, with a troubled look in her eyes, "there has recently been opened down town an elegant saloon which is called 'The Gilded Palace,' and last evening I overheard a conversation between Hugh and his friend, Chester Winthrop, concerning it. Hugh evidently thought it an improper place for moral young men to frequent; but Chester tried to overcome his scruples by informing him that there are rooms connected with the main saloon where moral men can assemble without coming in contact with anything objectionable, and that many of the best young men in town spend their evenings there. Pardon me, dear; but

have you made home attractive to Hugh of late?"

"I am afraid not, Cousin Helen; for I have fallen into the selfish habit of spending much time in my own room. Thank you for your timely suggestions."

That evening, as Hugh Nelson was passing through the hall, hat in hand, he was surprised to hear his sister call out from the parlor:

"Are you going out, Hugh?"

"Ye-es," he answered, with hesitancy; for a glance into the pretty parlor, with its glowing grate-fire and open piano, made him almost wish that he was going to spend the evening at home.

"Come in a little while, please, and help me select my new suit," pleaded Margie.

"Your new suit?" echoed Hugh, with astonishment. "What do I know about girls' suits?"

"I believe you can help me," urged Margie, "for you display fine taste in the selection of your own clothes. You know, Hugh, I have not been accustomed to

choose for myself, and I miss mamma so much."

There was a quiver in the voice that Hugh could not resist, and after hanging his hat on the rack he walked into the parlor, and was soon as deeply interested in the examination of dress samples and fashion-plates as his little sister could wish.

From that time Margie followed her cousin's suggestion to the very letter. She laid her plans before Hugh as she would have done before an older sister, always asking his opinion concerning them, thereby making him feel that she needed his companionship and counsel. By this means there was gradually formed between this brother and sister a bond of love which was truly beautiful.

Years passed, and one evening while Hugh and Margie Nelson were enjoying the quiet of their cozy parlor, Margie was startled by an exclamation of horror from her brother, and, on turning toward him, saw that he had dropped the evening paper, and had buried his face in his hands.

Catching up the paper, she anxiously glanced down the column of daily news until she came to this item :

"A young man, named Chester Winthrop, was fatally wounded last evening at the Gilded Palace saloon with a pistol-shot fired by David Holmes. Doubtless both of the young men were under the influence of liquor."

"Was Chester Winthrop once your friend?" asked Margie.

"Yes," answered Hugh, as he raised a pale face from his hands; "and but for the influence of my precious little sister I might be as he is to-night."

Margie looked incredulous; for Hugh had so many years been an earnest Christian, that she could not imagine him as having sunk to such depths of degradation as Chester Winthrop evidently had done.

"After mother died," resumed Hugh, with emotion, "I was sad and lonely. Father was absorbed in business, you spent much time by yourself, and I longed for some attractive place in which to spend my

evenings. Chester asked me to go to the Gilded Palace saloon, which, he said, had every attraction heart could wish. After much urging, I consented; but on the appointed evening you wished me to help you select your new suit. As I looked into the parlor, which you had made so bright and pretty, I thought some other night would do for my visit to the Gilded Palace, so I yielded to your persuasions, and spent the evening at home. But after that I found every evening the same, for you always had some pleasant entertainment in store for me; and I finally came to the conclusion that our parlor was palace enough for me, and that it would be difficult to find more attractive company than that of my own sweet sister.

“And, Margie,” he continued, while a soft light came into his eyes, “although I was not a Christian, you talked so freely with me about your religious experiences, that I could not fail to see the deep satisfaction you found in the religion of Jesus Christ. I soon came to yearn for the

peace and rest that you evidently enjoyed, and so I was led to yield my heart to the Savior. Ah! little Margie, if all sisters were as good and wise as mine has been, the saloon-keepers would find few victims among our young men."

While Margie Nelson listened to this candid confession, her heart was raised to God in gratitude for the blessed assurance of having been the instrument through which he saved her noble brother.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LEAGUE A BROTHERHOOD.

WHAT is your caste? is a question with thirteen answers in India. In America, "Our Clique" is born of sin. Sin breaks up society into sections. Sin draws lines between the ins and the outs. Sin arrays trusts hostile to non-trusts. Sin establishes fraternities less broad than all humanity. Sin drives away Cain as a fugitive, realizing but one concord; viz., that every man's hand is against him. Sin grooves out narrow-gauge sentiments and opinions, but broad-gauge roads for the sinner. Sin puts enmity between capital and labor. Sin imports the fuel of discord, quarried from the coal-pits of death. Sin grows the thorns of oppression, and produces the condition of master and slave. Sin lays unequal burdens in tariffs and taxes, and unequal yokes upon the necks of the people. Sin falsifies our statistics, and

corrupts white figures into untruthfulness. Sin bequeaths the iron heel of despotism, and the iron wedge between man and man. In fact, there is no discord or disease on earth or in hell but what sin has introduced.

The havoc here enumerated is baneful chiefly in the social realm of our race. What remedy can we apply early, and rely upon? for the disease is not infantile, to be endured once with future exemption. What will disperse and destroy the cause, counteract its seeds, and introduce social health? *Eureka!* Make an Epworth League. Let it deal with the cases in youth. Let it be comprehensive enough to encompass every child of Adam. Let the omnipresent "whosoever" of the Gospels be all gathered in. Give sin no residue to corrupt with its epidemic while a few elect are in the hospitals of salvation.

The first great remedy for sin is to break down all partitions among men, and gather all into a common brotherhood. Secondly, bind them all together in a bond of

common sympathy and Christian equality. But this can be effected only by uniting them all in sympathy with our elder brother, Christ.

But what we have described and prescribed is the precise work of the Epworth League. We could preach without end on the value of exercise to a convalescent. So the League arrays all its members into committees for exercise. And every industry of their *régime* knits stronger fibers in the universal ligature.

There is an instrument called a hemidyamometer, which is to determine how high up the throbbings of arterial blood will send the mercury. We recognize in the League a sort of hemidyamometer, whose province it is to equalize and lift the pulsations of all its members. Paul's patent hemidyamometer is thus described: "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Peter's patent is similar: "God hath made of one blood all the nations." The principle of action of all these patents is this: A great, universal brotherhood—Christ as the Elder

Brother, and then all hearts set to throbbing, through Christ, with the great heart of God. On this principle the League is incessantly augmenting and cultivating the universal brotherhood through the God-man.

"Help us to help each other, Lord,
Each other's cross to bear."

The first defect in all human fraternities is, that their metes and bounds are so narrow that not all people are eligible to membership. The ineligible are, by necessity, ostracized and neglected. The League has a gospel catholicity, that goes into the high-ways to compel them to come in.

The next defect in the otherwise beautiful systems of human fraternity is the lack of a Christ in the midst. That lack is fatal and mortal. The League exalts the Christ as the central Person for its worship, its Bond of union, its Chief among ten thousand. To this purpose the League's other excellencies are subservient and subordinate. The final formula of each League chapter is to

"Crown him Lord of all."

The defect of many brotherhoods and fraternities is, to entirely ignore sisterhood. A sweeping society that is to evangelize the human family, must recognize and fraternize women and families. The most devout members and efficient workers in almost every chapter of the League are among the women. Sweetest in song, purest in sympathy, most lenient in charity, she is easiest and soonest embellished with the graces of the Spirit into a herald of evangels.

But the most fatal defect of brotherhoods is the cessation of membership at some date. At best, death severs the fraternal bond in merely human societies. But the League, as the junior partner of the Church, has its reunion beyond death, and that reunion is eternal life. The League influence is incomplete until it witnesses its members die the death of the righteous, and treasures a faith in the final reunion.

The holy utility of the League will be better estimated in the undying influence

of its workers when they have gone to their reward. Others mount this monumental aggregate of the broken column, and up rises the united influence like a Colossus of the ages. This emargination of the influences of the generations extends the brotherhood of man by welding links in being's endless chain.

If a thousand years of time should yet roll, and the League is, during all this time, a living agent for God and the right, it is a pleasing anticipation that the record of the members of to-day is imperishable. It is wise to invest in the richly paying stock of a concern that is never to wind up.

It remains to speak of the closeness and friendliness of this brotherhood. Its bonds, beginning as gossamer webs, have increased to cables of love. This makes this brotherhood strong as gravitation which binds the stars. The members of the League, if true, are to be affiliated by the love of Jesus.

Surely, then, if the League is to include

both the sons and daughters of the Church; if it is to unite them into a holy and perpetual union for the highest good to all; if it be the nursery of the Church for folding the lambs of the flock, let its brotherhood be given a charter to take precedence of all charters save the Bible.

CHAPTER X.

THE LEAGUE A PROMOTER OF UNITY.

THE Epworth League had birth out of the throes of a holy desire in the Church for the embodiment of a complete unity in a society. The Church has had several blessed societies for young people, and their memory will be locally revered forever. They were clean and evangelical, but their birth and influence were local. Soon they began to grow and emarginate with each other; then to clash, not in spirit, but in search of membership; and, hence, to divide into ranks. Such partition exposed to friction. Should it go on, until one should say, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas?" There could not well be more than one universally popular and strong society, occupying the same ground and tending to the same goal, in our beloved Methodism.

Philosophy teaches that two bodies can

not occupy the same space at the same time; géometry adds that from one point to another but one straight line can be drawn. The realm of our young people's hearts and work is a denominational space; heaven and earth are two points in the geometry of our Church; and a straight line is the Christian's narrow path to be drawn by his walk from earth to heaven.

These facts were as absolutely demonstrable to our fathers, in our ecclesiastical organization, as they were in the realm of science. Each young people's society had a soul of action. The fathers did not believe in the transmigration of souls; but they did believe in that emblematic marriage which makes two souls one. Hence they besought God in prayer to create such a unity among these various societies. As loving co-workers with God, we believe, representatives of all the existing societies assembled at Cleveland, Ohio, with God in the midst, to perfect that union. We think them divinely directed in evolving this one grand unity—the Epworth League.

It embodies the essence and excellence of all the others. Being a unity, it can not clash in its own exclusive field; it can not be divided in discordant interests.

From this harmonious unity great results may be realized. We need but step into our sphere as political beings for an illustration. Two theories struggled for ascendancy in the Constitutional Convention of 1787. One was State sovereignty, the other National supremacy—thirteen sovereign interests, or only one. While the latter prevailed in the main, yet a concession was made in a compromise to the former to live on until it became the foe of National unity. Hence, in our memory, in order to preserve National unity, the sacrifice of half a million precious lives was required. But the National greatness and prosperity, its ongoing and prospects, demonstrate the wisdom of a preserved Union. So in this, our young people's Church-commonwealth, the statehood idea is to disappear, and our beloved Epworth League is to be a general theocracy, with no subordinate sover-

eighty disputing supremacy against God and the Church.

The plan furnishes the utmost latitude and longitude of spiritual enlargement to Methodist youth. Such a perfect organic union ought to bring into sympathy and membership all the younger Church members. For example, the union brings vast advantage: To the enlargement and perfection of our one organ—rather than many—the *Epworth Herald*; to the harmony of a work under one series of *Leaflets*, emanating from one set of officers; and, finally, to the collection of all those interests into one, before our charges, districts, annual conferences, camp-meetings, etc., for the attainment of stronger and better results. The writer was personally a zealous member of the Methodist Alliance; but observing that the Epworth League was created by marvelous wisdom and unanimity for the whole Church, and that the spirit and methods of the Alliance were incorporated into the League, he had no more hesitation in transferring all his sentiment and love

and his name to the new organization than a loving maiden has, on her wedding-day, in assuming the destiny and new name of her husband.

Another feature: There are societies which invite a union of young people of various denominations. None of these were of Methodist origin. Regarding the idea of perfect union and the resultant power for good, we fear an interdenominational society must tend to weaken the sum of aggregated individual power. We believe the several denominations ordained and blessed of God with missions under his guidance. With Presbyterian blood from his four grandparents, and Baptist blood from his two parents, the writer can not be accused of bigotry in asserting that each young people's society should be in exclusive union with and subordination to its own denomination. It is not improper to regard a young people's society as a feeder to the Church—in fact, a junior department of the Church.

Now, while all the principal doctrines

are the same in Christendom—as, for example, in the Apostles' Creed—yet these are minor questions, vitally affecting denominational success, and these young people's societies have the age and afford opportunity for indoctrination. We insist on the importance of denominational success in all sects, inasmuch as the whole Church is composed of denominations, and the success of each is the success of all. Each denomination can far better train, indoctrinate, save, and help the Lord give power to its own children than intrust them to a foundlings' hospital, from which emerging they may fail to recognize any spiritual mother, and become alienated from all Churches.

Undenominational societies must tend to weaken all the denominations, and hence the Christian host. It is certainly wisdom in every Methodist child to affiliate with our own society, the Epworth League.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LEAGUE AN ENTERTAINMENT.

THE wear of this world is prodigious. The earth is racing about the sun sixty-eight thousand miles per hour, and we are gliding onward with it. There is no stagnation. No wonder there are earthquakes, and volcanoes, and hurricanes, and cyclones, and waves of the sea. The wonder is that this rushing, seething mass does not tumble into instant chaos. But, however great the friction, our movements and our slumbers of probation are all to be on this earth. There are nervous people, and they too must be quieted on this nervous earth. If they should seek quiet, and it were possible in the moon or some planet, the restlessness would be the same. Even children need relaxation and recreation.

Then there is a sentiment of the novel and marvelous in mankind to be satisfied. These external and internal elements re-

veal the factors of a problem for the Christian and the philosopher. It is this: How shall suitable and innocent entertainment and relaxation be arranged for our children and youth? The answer: Must guard their habits, associations, absorptions, and future utilities. If the usefulness and entertainment can be happily blended, the plan will be an ingenious triumph. Like Newton's law of gravitation, the answer comes from the Epworth League. Like Newton's law, we have here a moral law that binds youth to youth, sex to sex, all to the Church, and the Church to its God.

Success in all the League's six departments is itself an entertainment. The prosperity of one's plans is an ever-increasing pleasure. A stated meeting with esteemed friends is always a gratification. To be confided in, with something to do officially as a committeeman, is as inspiring to children as to congressmen. To hear good reports, involving successes in which we are interested, is a mental nerveine. To feel that moral health is in all the

atmosphere, has the stimulant of a sanitarium.

In the League the entertainment is by no means confined to the "Department of Entertainment," though this department directly undertakes to feast our fancies, charm our visions, and gratify our tastes and intellects. Music, which always mingles on the program, is a fascination; excursions and picnics, which are to be provided, are almost intoxicating in their entertainment; and, if amusements be guarded from sinful admixture, they also coalesce as the very essence of entertainment.

A very bad heart can not well be charmed with an Epworth League, while the heart remains bad. But the League, by divine help, is to attract and recover the bad heart, and inspire it to seek a new heart. All God's servants are evangelizers, and all the Church's plans are formulated with that end. The League's mission is evangelization. It is superfluous to hunt up people who are not lost. All the way of life your

aid is invoked to change bad people into good, and good ones into better. Part of the constant entertainment, as you go, is to witness this transformation. There is no spiritual kaleidoscope equal to this view. As the most truly rapturous exhibition to the Christian is a clear, fresh conversion, so the most delicious entertainment of a League-worker is to witness the upbuilding of moral character among members.

All this entertainment of the League has an environment that the Church has built and sanctioned. Moral purity and moral health ought reasonably to be the outcome. We must not forget that, hungry and empty as the young soul gets, it must be entertained. The evil and harmful will be certain to intrude, unless wholesome substitutes be speedily provided. The prodigal son, in all his riots, was seeking entertainment. The longings and affections of a human heart reveal as absolute a vacuum as Torricelli ever found in a tube. The League insists that the filling of this heart-vacuum shall not be with refuse-

dumpings, like filling the lake-front for the Columbian Exhibition, but shall be with health, truth, and purity in all its entertainments.

We premise God bestowed eyes and ears upon people for a benevolent purpose. If otherwise, then the deaf, dumb, and blind are the favored ones, and the asylums for them are the true Edens. But the Creator of flowers with beauty and fragrance, and of birds with song and sympathy, made a respondent vision and symphony in man to entertain him, and lead his listening ears and eager eyes to nature's God. The League is in harmony with nature and with God. It was the first sinner who made use of the beautiful trees in the Garden as a bulwark against an angry God. A sinner can not be permitted unlimited entertainment anywhere in nature, for he will pervert the blessings, and use nature's retreats as improvised bulwarks against his Creator. Then every bush is an officer.

If men will only be reconciled to the Creator and be in league with his children,

nature assumes an inimitable face of beauty, and it charms the eyes and ears of the soul. So every exertion of the Epworth League is to attract men away from entertainments of the carnal—as appetite, passion, ambition. But it gives liberty to the mental and moral faculties while they stay upon innocent grounds. The world's entertainments are essentially licentious and corrupt. Dancing, gaming, racing, drinking, theatricals, and the like, all agree in ministering to the carnal nature with hurtful result; while literature, music, painting, and picnics with nature, are morally healthful. But to array Christian works and worship as the chief concerns, assures the highest beatitudes of healthful soul and body. The Beatitudes of Christ conferred no blessing on the merely carnal and sensual.

On the high plains of Christian duty the League would hold all its entertainments. The world's creeds write the following, in order of importance as to our threefold division: Physical, mental, moral.

On the contrary, the Epworth League agrees with God, the Bible, and the Church in reversing the order of these divisions—moral, mental, physical. All its recreations are in harmony with this arrangement. The moral is of supreme importance; the mental is its subordinate; while the physical is to be ever obedient to the moral first, and after to the mental. Whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

CHAPTER XII.

THE LEAGUE A GUIDE.

IN the early settlement of this country, the lone pilgrim often found he had been preceded by some benevolent pioneer; for some ax had blazed the trees along the bridle-path, and set up signals for those who should come after. Otherwise, the wilderness would shelter the bleaching bones of many a lost traveler. In the next generation, when settlements touched, and roads became numerous and crossed often, at each doubtful turn guide-boards were nailed up, by authority of the Government, having printed directions of the way; and lost people were only such as would not, or could not, read.

The earliest consciousness of every child is a memory of life's first cross-roads, as it were, attended with a dubious peering into the unknown, and a realization of bewilderment like a dream. Then these cross-

roads, with sign-boards, are photographed from the visual of the eye to the moral experience of the life. It is a tiny, rippling wavelet, from some unknown shore. Some broken branch of evergreen is floated upon the wavelet to our feet. Then a broken mast is borne on the next crest to land. And then a bruised and dead mariner is cast upon the beach. The young life, beholding the sea yield such fragmental trophies, reasons thus: "Beyond this ocean of time there must be a land where evergreens grow; where broken masts of wrecked vessels had conscious owners; and where owners, if without sufficient guidance, are in peril while aiming for the shores beyond." But how does it affect the child-faith when the Old Sea Captain of all these waters, well versed in navigation, dripping with the salt of the sea, aged with service, invincible in multiplied voyages, launches a ship which is absolutely impregnable against storms and rocks and seas?

What if the Captain is thoroughly

known to be infallible in safety, omnipotent in power, omniscient in wisdom, and infinite in love? What if he thoroughly controls the five oceans of earth, with their adjacent continents and included islands, and is just as familiar a Master over that dread ocean of the vast unknown and awfully profound, just beyond which lie the hills of immortality and the city of God? What if he produce proof—valid in any court—that he has spread out by creation an upper universe, free from sin, and has embellished it with a spired city, full of mansions, which he offers free, with safe and free transportation and subsistence forever? It would create such expectation that none should fail to embark, and in confident allegiance cry: "Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."

You may now see we are not using parables, but have introduced the first conscious experience of every child. No romance is comparable with solemn truth; no waters like the bay of time and the ocean of eter-

nity; no captain like the Christ; no chart like the Bible; no want like the great, conscious desolation of sin, weakness, and ignorance. With the sign-boards all down, and the roads obliterated, and moral wrecks floating upon our shores, and the dark, deep ocean of the unknown just beyond the ken of our coast-line, and only a sprig of evergreen hope floating upon an echo—"I am the resurrection and the life"—what a great salvation it is of the tender Christ as he proffers his guidance!

But those gracious and timely guide-boards, and those trees—blazed by the authority of Heaven—how opportune! The Epworth League chapters are veritable guide-boards and blazed trees. The young traveler, as he runs, can here clearly read: "This is the way, walk ye in it;" "I am the way, the truth, and the life;" and in all languages the superscription—"This is the King of the Jews." It is the glory and authority of these Epworth guide-boards that they are founded on the authority of

the Word. Their index always points truthfully, and at each crossing some one of the roads leads heavenward.

If these metaphors be true teachers, then the Epworth League has authority from God and his Church to guide the lost children of our race upon safe roads and to heavenly goals.

The solemn importance of such a guide as the League, under God, is more impressive when we see the unreliability and fatality attending mere human guides. The world is replete with false and blind guides. Satan employs an army of guides. The cemeteries are full of victims who were misguided to their death. The hospitals teem with souls, wounded while under the care of vicious guides.

It is the ostensible profession of every book and paper extant to guide the children of men. All private conversation and all public oration consist of voices either asking or proffering guidance. Some voices, as utterly ignorant of the way as a lost sheep would be in dictating it to the good

shepherd, set themselves up for reliable guides. The pictures of books and periodicals are transformed into guides. Feet in the ball-room profess to guide other feet through this world. Saloons, supporting the foaming index that points within, with a glittering halo of stolen adjectives, pilot souls in through their front doors, to emerge out through the gates of death. As much as each young soul may have his guardian angel, he more certainly has the offer of a guiding demon.

If the true and the false guides alike offer, how solemn is human choice! how fearful responsibility! God is true, his Church is true; the Epworth League, being a movement of the Church, is also a true guide. The good, the beautiful, and the true compose its faithful plans and offers. Its fidelity is certified in its pure and useful results. It becomes a gratification, like a constant benediction, that every young man and woman can be so faithfully trained and guided by this safe society of the Church.

It is easy to account for so many wrecked fortunes and blasted lives, when we see so many youth rejecting all guidance and taking the hazardous risk of guiding self. "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him." Self-guidance is the prognostic of certain failure. Poor dupes of appearances are those who, without compass or companionship, would hazard the breakers of the moral sea and the monsters of the moral land. Suicidal is the youth who actually tempts the tempter to so whisper all his designs that they may appear as self-devised by the tempted.

One of the follies of youth is to feel over-wise. To surround a career with honor, health, fortune, usefulness, holiness, and to urge the candidate to faithful perseverance to the end of life, divine guidance must directly or indirectly come. The guidance and association of the League, sanctioned by the Church, must be helpful. Son, daughter, seek its fold next to that of the Church and your God. Father,

mother, if you would not lose hold of your child forever, see that, besides home help and other Church helps, he adds also the help of the Epworth League.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LEAGUE A MEMENTO ETERNAL.

CAN the League furnish us memories that will be pleasing in old age and in our heavenly home? And can the League also bequeath a pleasing memory concerning us to others? Some way, moral photography casts the images of action forward into the daylight of futurity. There is nothing hidden that shall not be made manifest. Of things said and done, the reverberations travel like echoes, on and on, into the wave pulsations of the great hereafter. While some things appear to be temporarily obliterated, yet nothing is annihilated from memory. The experiences of this earth must all be rehearsed by the recollections within us, in the ages and eras and cycles of our immortal state.

We can not be indifferent to these marvelous facts. We must be intensely interested while we here accumulate a capital

stock—not transferable—of words, actions, influences, that shall abide forever, as the soul's wealth of memory. Memory will escape our shrouds, and soar away with our souls, and hold up its pictures with a deathless fidelity. If so, and if we want pure pictures to adorn our house beautiful forever, it is imperative that thought, word, and action be washed pure and worthy of eternal life.

More, if a dark and corrupt life also faithfully flings its memory-pictures, like shadows, into the deep darkness of eternal death, making darkness darker, and if no memory dies to those who forever die, then how earnestly must our actions here guard with the vigilance of dear life from those pictures now which make the negatives of future woe!

We are resolved into record-makers. We register all the records, and file away for future examination. We bind the files into a perpetual autobiography. Some of the questions in our book of memory are these: What have I done for humanity?

How many souls will rise up to call me blessed forever? Are any sins unblotted? Is the record washed and purged? Have I done what I could?

Young life starts with a blank-book of memory. O how white and clean it is! Will it be kept unsmirched? Our gravest fears are well-grounded. We can aid the young. Our aid in the balances may swing them safely into purity and righteousness. Before God, we must seize the opportunity. They must, somehow, be committed to Jesus.

The Epworth League is our photograph gallery, where we finish the pictures for eternity. We will not be ashamed of the glorious record, if faithful to the spirit and work of the League. Its charities and works of love, its inspiring songs and fervent devotions, its helpful influences and bracing associations, are creating healthful materials for the feasts of memory in the life that now is, and in that which is to come. I am persuaded that that blank-book, which is the diary of our daily actions,

may be rendered the sweetest volume in the archives of this universe. Yonder in eternity, after a million years, this record of autobiography may be read with supreme felicity: "From 1890 to 1900 of our Lord's incarnation, while I was in the perilous youthhood of my earthly probation, the Epworth League was my holy field of labor and my safe environment. I was gloriously kept. And my eternal joy was pendent on that blessed organization which brought me to Jesus."

We have thus far dwelt upon that active function within us called memory. But there is a passive sense to the word, in which the memory of others retains us and our traits in exemption from oblivion. No one can be indifferent as to the chronicles of himself which he registers upon the memory of others. We have said personal memory was an autobiography, as it were, for our eternity. In fact, the unwritten library of the world of spirits will be composed of the biographical sketches of every child of Adam; and each soul will pro-

duce a duplicate of all the familiar spirits of earth.

What will the thousands of souls, who witnessed the works we have done, treasure up concerning us? How many albums in reminiscence of us will need no revision to shine in the white light of eternity? It were vastly better to have been known in the Epworth League than in the saloon, the ball-room, the haunt of fleshly gratification, or the den of sin. It were more pleasing to have this abiding record of all future duration, composed among these songs and praises and labors of charity, than to have the recording angel drop a tear and unconsciously blot our page with his sorrow. It would be preferable to be a pilgrim of toil, translated to the gates of paradise from the League, rather than to be arrayed in the rich shroud of the millionaire.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LEAGUE THE LIGHT BRIGADE OF THE CHURCH MILITANT.

THE tread of armies and the ongoing of artillery are thrilling events in the world's history. They presage power in motion, and anticipate conquests and victories. The favorite metaphor with the Church is military activity, and it is aptly called the Church militant. The name suggests many points of analogy. The spiritual struggle involves life or death; it is to revolutionize the status of the foes. The enemy is aggressive, claiming everything; the resources are nothing, save faith and prayer; God is our ally, and the confederation is thus invincible.

Military education and organization are the prime requisites of a good soldier; afterwards he must be armed. For the first named purpose, governments establish military and naval academies for the proper

training of officers; while recruiting and training camps become the rendezvous for the enlisted rank and file.

So, also, the Church, as a veteran army for service, has ordained the Epworth League as a training-school for officers and men, antecedent to veteran work in the Church proper. The preliminary in the League furnishes the acts in similitude of the coming moral battle: Here the pean of victory is sung in advance; here the Christian's panoply is brought out, and fitted on, and completely proven. Paul's catalogue of armor is adjusted; namely, the breastplate of righteousness, shod feet, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. The modes and purpose of our spiritual enemy are made known, and our ransomed powers are put through the Manual. How to advance, how to file right and left, how to lead an attack, how to storm a fort, how to gain captives for the Lord of hosts, and how to transform them into League soldiers, are all fully explained.

Many a Church is a weakling because deficient in trained leaders. One who wisely knows how, what, and when to sing, is like a brave armor-bearer in battle. One who can lead a meeting of prayer and experience, so as to fan the flames of vigorous life, and because of brevity leave an unsurfeited spiritual hunger, is a valuable officer. These gifts are chiefly the results of training, as in the Moodys, the Spurgeons, the Simpsons. The League becomes the training-school for them.

But the League does more than to lie idle, in safe camps for training. It is an important division of the main army—the Church. It is the light brigade for flinging forward re-enforcements, for harassing the wings of the enemy, for hurrying forward as an advance guard, for surrounding the foe in retreat, for gathering captives, and for anticipating the enemy everywhere with important strategy. Precisely so, the League is fervent in keeping alive the evangelical spirit; it pioneers into new neighborhoods, where new Churches are to

be planted; it stands to rescue tempted and endangered young Christians; it attracts many a new face into the congregation, and adds interest to every service by numbers and spirituality.

In military tactics, flying artillery is indispensable. So in the Church militant. John saw a "mighty angel flying through the air and preaching the everlasting gospel." John's vision forces before us a vision of the League as a light brigade, without impediments; radical in first Christian love; ubiquitous in spiritual aggression and conquest.

We continue the similitude. The League often becomes the army of invasion and of occupation. While the Church is the nucleus, the head-quarters, the spiritual center, yet the ardent young Leaguers, fervent in duty, scour the neutral ground beyond Church bounds for additional conquest. Unconverted people may have "associate" membership in the League. The evident design is to lead in from associate to active relations. Thus probationers, under an-

other name, are attracted into glorious Christian activity. Thus the League becomes an army of invasion, where the Church proper may not intrude—since we may only “persuade men.” When this ground is persistently held under the banner of the Cross until the Church can act, then associate, persuaded men become Christian men. In these maneuvers of evangelization the League becomes an army of occupation.

“When that illustrious day shall rise,
And all thine armies shine
In robes of victory through the skies,
The glory shall be thine.”

CHAPTER XV.

THE LEAGUE THE SUPPLY OF CERTAIN UN- PROVIDED WANTS.

WE believe God's Church is as perfect as human material can be. We also believe, with millions of others, that the people called Methodists are as complete and efficient for saving souls as the people of any Christian name or order in this world. But Methodism has that magnanimous elasticity which seeks to array and equip every improved auxiliary. Hence Methodism has from the first founded colleges for both boys and girls; she has from her beginning been an ardent advocate of Sunday-schools; she has continued to foster benevolences, until she has nearly half a score of large chartered societies, so as to cast her benign influences in as many departments of work. These are not formal, but financial, and create Bibles, tracts,

libraries, schools, church-buildings, bread, and meat.

But Christ, the greatest of Church-builders, is still building and authorizing additions. We believe his blessing and authority are conferred upon the League that it may serve a special purpose. The League's object is set forth in Leaflet I, Article II, of the General Constitution:

"The object of the League is to promote intelligent and loyal piety in the young members and friends of the Church, to aid them in the attainment of purity of heart and in constant growth in grace, and to train them in works of mercy and help."

It has been demonstrated that when old, experienced Christians and the young and timid meet together in social service, a commendable and beautiful courtesy imposes a deferential silence upon the young. But that silence is to their religious detriment. The older members often—not wisely—consume all the time, and the younger fail to receive a blessing, or growth, or religious training. Thus their path to

backsliding is made easy. The Church would not be wise to train dumb witnesses for truth. To correct these difficulties the Church creates the Epworth League. It is for the young people. Here the young may grow by full exercise. The division, however, of these persons is but temporary. The fence is not of barbed wire; but, like lines of latitude and longitude, it is only imaginary. In the Church proper—which is not superseded, but aided—there is no division between old and young. All are one body and spirit.

The pastor, however old he may be, is still a member of the chapter and of the cabinet of the League. He is virtually the controlling adviser in all its work. Sabbath-school teachers, and others intimately associated with the young in social and educational life, full of warm sympathy with them, should also be welcomed to the League. Their experience is needful for its largest helpfulness and usefulness. Certainly, if this organization can attract each son and daughter of the Church in youth,

and keep them safer to present to the Church later as trained veterans, then the League has a lawful apology for its existence.

Another fact: Age tends toward conservatism; youth is radical. Youth looks to results rather than to forms. It is the infusion of new blood, pulsating stronger and wider. Paul welcomed young Timothy into the fellowship of the Churches. It was well surmised that the League would quicken the Church itself by this infusion of fresh blood. It is a spiritual elixir, and causes the old ecclesiastical arteries and veins to vibrate with more potent throbs. If such a revival can be thus made self-acting within the Church control, it is a glorious achievement of grace.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUSION.

DEAR READER, our God is organizing his forces for the further and final conquest of the world. Among these forces, he has impressed his servants to institute the Epworth League.

You are solicited to act in concert with the movement. Of course your prayers, influences, and indorsement will be valuable; but the vital essence of your responsibility and your accountability will depend upon *what you have done*.

The Epworth League aims, first, to anticipate the works of the devil by reaching, if possible, children so young as to find them unoccupied and unpossessed, and then to fill them, and train them into a growth of purity, for Christ and the Church, from the cradle to the grave. But, in the second place, if the League finds children or

youth tempted and preoccupied with evil, it is to present them inducements to purity and righteousness, in such beautiful and charming array as to win every soul for Christ.

It is trusted you will not be a stumbling-block—either of the obstruction variety, or a zero of illogical neutrality. Be so consistent as to cheerfully contribute all your ransomed powers—what you are, and what you ought to be—and that enthusiastically, in furtherance of the League movement.

My vision is arm in arm with the vision of St. John. And I am eagerly eying each trophy-bearing spirit, in the "great multitude which no man could number," to see if your washed soul is in this home-bound procession. And my vision reveals that the throngs entering the gates, in this later procession, are denser and of younger average spirits than the advance-guard which John saw. The first-fruits of the Sunday-school and the Epworth League are the golden sheaves in this harvest

of the world. And my vision will become a jubilation, when thousands rise up in that day to call you "blessed" for the works you have done in the *Epworth League*.



APPENDIX.

I.

LET it be kept in mind that the Epworth League is an organization for Christian service. Heretofore we have been organizing young people for amusement or entertainment. The idea has prevailed that they are not competent to take up the real work of the Church; that they must wait until some years of discipline, of tutorage, of maturing growth, are past. But the process was not a little like that of the mother who charged her boys "never to go near the water until they had learned to swim." The things at which we set them did not help them to know how to work for Christ. Our organizations rather dissipated than developed efficiency. But the Epworth League proposes to set them right at work. It is the young life of the Church *organized for the work of the Church*. It is not pastime, but earnest, joyful service, which it contemplates.

The formula of the League puts before the whole Church a model of systematized Church-work. Not perfect, probably, in all its details—not adapted in all its arrangements to every Church field—but yet, with all its imperfections and limitations, a model.

And the Epworth League may prove to be a training-school, not only to the young people of the Church, but to the older people as well, in systematic Christian work.

We append the plan of work as outlined for the Leagues by the General Board of Control. While no chapter is compelled to take up all the departments, or all the items of any department, every busy, helpful Church will probably find something to do in each of these divisions of work:

1st. DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN WORK.—First Vice-President, Chairman.

- (a) Young People's Prayer-meeting.
- (b) Spiritual Welfare of Members.
- (c) Christian Work among the Young.
- (d) Sunday-school Interests.
- (e) Missionary Work.
- (f) Open-air Meetings.

2d. DEPARTMENT OF MERCY AND HELP.—Second Vice-President, Chairman.

- (a) Systematic Visitation.
- (b) Temperance.
- (c) Tract Distribution.
- (d) Junior League Work.
- (e) Home Mission Work.
- (f) Social Purity.
- (g) Employment Bureau.

3d. DEPARTMENT OF LITERARY WORK.—Third Vice-President, Chairman.

- (a) Bible Study.
- (b) Lectures and Literary Work,
- (c) Lyceums, Libraries, and Educational Work.
- (d) Church Literature.
- (e) Epworth League Readings.
- (f) C. L. S. C. Readings.

4th. DEPARTMENT OF ENTERTAINMENT.—Fourth Vice-President, Chairman.

- (a) Reception and Introduction of Members.
- (b) Socials and Social Entertainments.
- (c) Music for all Meetings.
- (d) Excursions and Picnics.
- (e) Amusements for all Meetings.
- (f) Badges, etc.

5th. DEPARTMENT OF CORRESPONDENCE.—Secretary, Chairman.

- (a) All Records.
- (b) Correspondence with Central Office.
- (c) Correspondence with Absent Members.
- (d) Historical and Other Statistics.
- (e) Record of Literary Work.

6th. DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE.—Treasurer, Chairman.

- (a) All Regular Finance.
- (b) Expense of Departments.
- (c) Collection of Dues.
- (d) Raising of Funds.
- (e) Expenditures.

II.

THE Epworth League is neither a rival nor a colleague of Chautauqua. Its mission lies along another line. It is as pre-eminently a spiritual movement as Chautauqua is an intellectual. The difference may, perhaps, be expressed as follows: Chautauqua stands for an intellectual movement, with a religious basis;

Epworth stands for a religious movement, with an intellectual basis. Epworth's aim is to make young disciples efficient servants of Christ and the Church. That involves, *first*, intense spirituality, complete consecration, the impartation of the gifts of the Spirit. But, *secondly*, it involves intelligence—such discipline of the mental powers as shall enable the young Christian to think vigorously for Christ; such knowledge of Christian truth as shall enable him to think clearly; such knowledge of men and methods as shall make him practical in all his thinking and acting. Hence the Epworth League proposes, as part of its great mission, the training of its adherents for more efficient, because more intelligent, Church membership. With this in view, a course of reading, made up of matter carefully selected, has been arranged by the executive committee. It is to be hoped that many young Methodists will avail themselves of the opportunity which it affords to more thoroughly qualify themselves for usefulness in the Church.

Below is given the names and prices of the books to be read this year—1890-91:

The New Testament,	5 cents, upward.
Studies in the Four Gospels, J. L. Hurlbut; crown, 8vo, cloth,	\$0 40
The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life, H. W. Smith; 12mo, cloth,	60
Short History of the Church in the United States, J. F. Hurst; 16mo, cloth,	40
At the Threshold, R. C. Houghton; 12mo, cloth,	50
From the Thames to the Trosachs, E. H. Thompson; 12mo, cloth,	50

The five books (not including the New Testament) can be had for \$2.25, postage or express prepaid.

Readings on Methodism in the *Epworth Herald*:

Single copies,	\$1 50	per year.
Clubs of five,	1 25	"
" ten,	1 00	"
" twenty-five, or more,	80	"

A leaflet, containing outline plan for the reading and other important information concerning it, will be sent on application.

III.

SOME of our most gifted Methodist authors have given special attention to the preparation of books for the young. We have the material for some choice Epworth League libraries already stored in our depositories. And the marvelous vitality of this movement is bringing new authors to the front with their contributions. But this volume of literature can do no good until set in motion. It is needed in very many homes, where young Methodists are preparing for life's great responsibilities. The Epworth League ought to provide a channel for its circulation. The organization will fail at one most important point, if it does not put the young life of the Church in touch with our busy presses and with the crowded shelves of our book-stores. The agents, ever vigilant and alert, fully appreciate this opportunity. They are giving special attention to the demands of this new movement. They are putting some of their brightest, best books in beautiful paper binding, to offset the influence of the trashy literature that circulates so widely among the young. They are taking great care

that only the very best books, pure and strong and helpful, shall go into this special "Epworth Series." They have arranged and catalogued several choice, though small, League libraries. They have the best facilities for assisting pastors and committees in making special selections of books for this purpose. The value of a Church publishing-house, controlled by men appointed by the Church for this service, and responsible to the Church in its performance, was never more important than at this crisis. So much depends upon the most judicious and conscientious selection of the literature which shall mold the thought and lives of our young people. We can not afford to intrust a matter of so great importance to irresponsible people. Let us improve the opportunity afforded us by the League to enlarge the circulation of our own literature and the usefulness of our splendid Book Concern.

